FALL, 1945

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The Quill

STUDENT LITERARY MAGAZINE

Queens College

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

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LEE

Christmas Sounds

FLORA ANN NOWELL

I love the sounds of Christmas time—
The carols sung in manner gay,
The cries of joy, the rhythmic chime
Of bells on swifty running sleigh,
The resonant and sweeping power
Of Handel's great *Messiah* sung
By full-voiced choristers; the hour
On Christmas Eve when just among
Our family group we gather near
The Christmas tree by candlelight
To sing in manner soft and clear
The ever lovely "Silent Night"—
I love them all; they seem to be
The echo of that great night when
The angels sang with heavenly glee
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

Aftermath

FLORA ANN NOWELL

TWO MARINES were walking down a shady street in a small town down South. One was tall, bronzed, and very blond. His keen blue eyes looked with interest on the neat yards and houses on each side of the street. He was walking with a cane, for he was not quite used to the new leg, but other than that he looked fit enough. The other marine was also wounded. He hobbled along rather painfully on three legs and strained at his leash. He was a war dog, trained to be ferocious; and his companion found it hard to keep him from lunging at passers-by.

"Wait a minute, old fellow," said the young man. "Twelve thirty-one. That must be the house over there. Yes, that's it. Come on, boy. You're home!"

They turned up the neat walk to the little brick house. "Aren't you glad to be home, Rex?" The dog barked and sniffed the ground as though trying to fit this place into his memory so recently intrenched with sounds of gun fire and strange smells—smells that meant danger.

The marine rang the doorbell and was answered by a youngster of about ten, sturdy and tousled. His gray eyes lit up when he saw the dog.

"Rex," he cried.

Then his arms were about the animal, but he soon jumped back in dismay, for Rex's sharp white fangs were bared, and he was growling. The boy looked up helplessly at the marine.

"He doesn't know me," he said in surprise.

"He's been through a lot since you saw him last. He'll have a little trouble getting used to being gentle, I guess. We all do." He grinned. "I forgot. My name is Wilbert Hale—the fellows call me Whitie. On account of my hair. I guess you're Timmie Neal."

"Yes, sir."

"You've got a fine dog, Tim. I was his trainer. We got real fond of each other. I sort of hate to part with him."

"Yeah, he *was* a good dog."

"He still is. Give him time. He'll get used to you. Oh yeah, you'd better get a vet to look at his leg. The cast may be ready to come off."

"Sure, I'll take good care of him. Oh, won't you come in?"

"Nope. Guess I'd better be going. Write me once in a while. I'd like to know how the pooch is. I live near Carson City—route two."

"Say, isn't this sort of out of your way?"

"Yeah, I just wanted to see that the pup got here O. K. He's a good dog—a hero—but I guess you know about that."

"Yeah."

"He saved my life more than once."

"Gee-ee;" then excitedly, "Hey, he remembers me now." Sure enough, the dog was licking his hand.

"See, I told you so. Better keep him in the yard for awhile. He might hurt somebody. Well, so long, Timmie. So long, Rex." He turned and started down the walk. Without hesitation the dog followed him.

"No, Rex, you stay here. Stay here, boy," he said in tone of tender command.

Rex turned to his position by the boy's side. The husky marine with a wave of his hand started up the walk again and disappeared from sight without looking back. Timmie turned to his former playmate and shook his head sadly. He had been looking forward to having him back so much, but now—well, he was afraid it wasn't the same dog that had left some months ago.

As the days passed, Rex became more used to his former surroundings. He succumbed to Timmie's displays of affection and was soon following him about, but he had nothing but disdain for the rubber balls and bones of his youth. He was nervous, too. He would jump at the slightest sound, and any stranger who came into his surroundings would receive ferocious growls and bared fangs. When Timmie's father tried to discipline the dog after he had mercilessly killed a stray cat which had wandered into the yard, he almost got his hand bitten off. Later, however, Rex came to Timmie with an irresistible appeal in his eyes for forgiveness. He was forgiven.

The first week after his cast was off, Rex leaped the picket fence around the back yard and ran down the street to create general havoc in the town. By the time he was stopped there were three dead cats, four decapitated chickens, and two people severely bitten, not to mention a number of cats, chickens, and human beings who were almost scared out of their wits. That night the overwhelming appeal in his eyes for forgiveness only made Timmie want to cry. He knew that it was no use—that the dog would have to go. He didn't even try to argue with his father when he told him that he had already called the pound and that they were coming out early the next morning.

"Gee, Dad," he said and paused, "I wish he had been killed in battle. It would have been better than this."

His father understood, but there was nothing that he could do. That night Timmie could not go to sleep. He kept trying to think of some way out for Rex. About midnight the idea struck him. He did not wait for morning, but dashed into his father's room at once.

Fifty miles away Whitie Hale, crack marine, winner of the D. S. C. and other lesser hardware, was trying to get out of his system the habit of killing. He was the sensitive sort, and war had got into his blood. Beside it everything else seemed tame—even his mother's super apple pie, which was what every G. I. was supposed to dream of in his foxhole. But Whitie hadn't thought of it, not even once. He sometimes wondered why he hadn't, why he was so content with his lot, why he was never afraid. It wasn't that he enjoyed war, enjoyed killing fellow creatures. He certainly didn't enjoy the filth and heat of the tropics, nor the haunting thought that death might await him. But he did love the thrill and danger that war brought. He found a perfect companion in the fearless Rex. Together they would slink through the jungles on dangerous missions of death, and the combination of Rex's keen senses and Whitie's steady trigger finger brought many Jap snipers to their doom.

Whitie was ashamed of the exultation that he felt when he saw a dead Jap fall head-first from a palm tree. He had fought the feeling valiantly, but it was still there.

"Gad," he told himself, "I must be just a blood-thirsty butcher."

He was never careful, but he was lucky; so when he finally got it one steaming hot day, he was more surprised than anything else. It nearly killed him when he learned that his leg would have to go; but when he heard that Rex, who had been severely wounded trying to save his master's life, was to be put out of his misery, he forgot himself in an earnest plea for the dog. He won his case, and at length both recovered. All the way back on the hospital ship he kept debating with himself whether to take the dog back to his rightful owner or to keep him unlawfully. He knew in his heart that he couldn't do the latter because somewhere there was a boy named Timmie Neal who loved that dog just as much as he did. Nevertheless, he insisted upon delivering the animal in person, just to be sure that Timmie really loved him and would take good care of him.

Assured of this, he had returned to the humdrum life at Carson City, route two. He was restless, bored, and jumpy. He resented everything—his parents' sympathy, his girl's melodramatic "Don't think that your—well—your accident will change the way I feel about you," the way everyone avoided mentioning his condition, or the war in general. He lashed at his parents, his girl, his friends, everyone. Then he would be ashamed of himself and beg forgiveness, but the next day it would happen again.

One day his father suggested that he go hunting, but it wasn't fun anymore. He surprised a beautiful doe in a clearing, and he couldn't shoot her. It was too easy; she couldn't fight back. He never tried hunting again.

Matters were getting worse and worse when one day he saw the mailman put a large crate beside the mail box. Curious, he hurried out to see what it was. His heart leaped when he saw that it was an animal crate. He tore the top slats off with his bare hands, and he almost wept with joy when Rex leaped out. The dog was so happy that he was wagging all over, and the joy of reunion was too great for either words or barks.

When both of them had quieted down a little, Whitie noticed a note attached to the dog's collar. "Dear Whitie," he read, "Rex caused a little trouble here, and Dad said we couldn't keep him any more. I thought you might want him. If you don't, I guess you'll have to send him to the pound in Carson City. He's a good dog. Your friend, Timmie."

"You bet he's a good dog, Timmie," Whitie cried aloud. "So you caused some trouble, old man? Well, I understand because I've been causing trouble, too. Lots of it. But don't you worry. Together we'll show 'em that war hasn't changed us permanently. Yes siree. We'll show 'em." And in his heart he knew that they would. It would be easy now that he had an understanding friend.

The Candle

ANN PERRY

I snuffed a candle's light today;
A little smoke curled up;
Then standing in the still, cold dark,
I wondered if I took a life
And saw a soul soar up to God.

The Psalms as Literature

MARY MCGILL

ASSUMING that by literature we mean that class of written material which by reason of superior subject-matter and style gives promise of lasting worth, undoubtedly the Psalms are literature. Indeed we cannot overlook the fact that although they are thousands of years old, people still go to them for comfort and confidence. It is significant, furthermore, that they have been the source of artistic achievement in poets and composers. To attract great artists, they must be true art themselves.

A great work of literature must contain qualities that insure a continued appeal to people of all ages. This timelessness is one of the most outstanding features of the Psalms. Written over a period of hundreds of years, they treat subjects of vital interest and high importance to our own society. Taken as a whole, this collection of poems seeks to define and explain man's relation to God and the effects of this relationship upon his personal life and his contacts with his fellowman. Any great literature attempts to do this same thing. *The Republic* of Plato seeks to contrive an ideal society in harmony with truth, or in Christian connotation, God. The great pagan tragedies of fifth-century Greece present man in conflict with a superior force which they designated as fate. It cannot be denied that such a subject is of vital concern to humanity in any age. Think back over Psalm XCI: contrasted against the inimitable scope of God's existence is the minuteness of the span of human life. Or take Psalm CXXXIX for another example: in a more personal way the poet attempts to establish a relationship between man and maker.

A second phase of the universality of the Psalms is their subjectivity. "Just as the Hebrews were a people of concrete and vivid imagination, a people who dealt in sense impressions and emotions rather than in abstract thinking, so their language was primarily a language of the senses and of the heart." The value of literature is the satisfaction of recognizing there former experiences and emotions, and this pleasure we experience in reading the Psalms. Certainly no one of us has been besought by enemies such as David had when he wrote Psalm LIX. But certainly we have each felt the despondency and the subsequent confidence after our sight has been cleared and we focus our spiritual sight again on God. Nor have we committed sins like those of David; but again we have felt the shame he had of his sin and the love he felt for a forgiving God:

For I know my transgressions;
And my sin is ever before me.
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation
And uphold me with a willing spirit.
O Lord, open thou my lips;
And my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Other emotions are described. Look at the jubilance of Psalm XLVII:

O clap your hands, all ye peoples;
Shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
Sing praises to God, sing praises;
For God is the King of the earth:
Sing ye praises with understanding.

Or the confidence of XCI:

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty;
I will say of Jehovah, He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in whom I trust.

Or recall the dejection of Psalm LXXXVIII:

For my soul is full of troubles,
And my life draweth nigh unto Sheol.
I am reckoned with them that go down into the pit;
I am as a man that hath no help,
Cast off among the dead,
Like the slain that lie in the grave;
Whom thou rememberest no more;
And they are cut off from thy hand,
Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit,
In dark places, in the deeps,
Thy wrath lieth hard upon me,
And thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.

Lastly, the Psalms are universal because they are ageless in their application. They are as fitting for twentieth-century Americans as they were for feudal lords of the Middle Ages; and they will be just as applicable a thousand years hence. There always will be sadness; therefore a need for comfort. There always will be sin: therefore a need for forgiveness.

The Psalms measure up to the criteria of great poetry just as they do to those of great literature. Poe in his "Essay on Criticism" established one test of a good poem: Does it create one atmosphere or impression? By this standard the Psalms rank with any good poetry. The atmosphere of awe and majesty established in Psalm XXIX is especially striking:

The voice of Jehovah is upon the waters;
The God of glory thundereth,
Even Jehovah upon many waters;
The voice of Jehovah is powerful;
The voice of Jehovah is full of majesty;
The voice of Jehovah cleaveth the flames of fire;
The voice of Jehovah shaketh the wilderness;
The voice of Jehovah shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh;
The voice of Jehovah maketh the hinds to calve;
And strippeth the forest bare;
And in his temple everything saith, Glory!

These few verses from Psalm CVI reveal an atmosphere of humility and shame:

They forgot God their Savior, which had done great things in Egypt;
Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word;
But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord.
Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel,
and were brought into subjection under their hand.

Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry.
And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

The simplicity of Psalm CXXXI; the dejection of XXXVIII; the joy of XCVI; the calm dignity of XXIII—all are examples of this mood creation.

Another poet and critic, Sir Philip Sidney, ascribed two purposes to poetry: to teach and to delight. The very fact that we read the Psalms today is proof of their delight; and the applicability of their teachings to contemporary life is indicative of the soundness of their principles.

There are four main types of poetry, each of which is exemplified in the Book of Psalms. Psalms LXXVIII and CV are narrative; they give condensed histories of the Israelites—their wanderings and their deliverances. Psalms XLIX, XC, and CIII are didactic; they are in effect short sermons for our reading. Psalm II is representative of dramatic poetry. Psalms CXXXI, VI, XCIII, and CXIV are excellent examples of lyrical poetry; joy, bitterness, disappointment—all find expression in these and other Psalms.

Hebrew poetry was somewhat different from traditional poetry in that it lacked rhyme, although blank verse, a popular form in recent years, is characterized in like manner. But even though the Psalms lack rhyme, they have a rhythm perceptible even in translation. For example, note the lilting, rather whimsical meter of these lines:

The sea saw it and fled;
The Jordan was driven back;
The mountains skipped like rams;
The little hills like lambs.

Or the majestic dignity of these opening lines from Psalm XXIV:

The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein;
For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.

There is a jubilant rhythm in Psalm XCIII:

The floods have lifted up, O Jehovah,
The floods have lifted up their voice;
The floods lift up their waves.
Above the voices of many waters,
The mighty breakers of the sea.

Another striking feature of the Psalms is an abundance of parallelism—the art of balancing the two halves of a line or even of an entire passage. A peculiar quality of ancient Egyptian and Babylonian poetry, this parallelism or thought is the essential basis of most Hebrew poetry. The form most frequently used is synonymous parallelism, the same thought being repeated in both divisions in different words:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.

Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Another commonly used form is known as synthetic parallelism; here the two thoughts are balanced by a relationship of consequence, or cause and effect:

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?

The following verse shows a skillful combination of synthetic and synonymous parallelism:

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

A third form, in which the second half of the construction is the direct contrast of the first, is antithetical parallelism. The following verses are notable examples:

A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee.

Weeping may endure for a night; but joy cometh in the morning.

A last and less common form is climactic parallelism. As the name implies, the thoughts are arranged in ascending order of importance or effect to work up to a climax. Psalm XXIX offers several examples of such parallelism:

Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty; give unto the Lord glory and strength.
Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.

The voice of the Lord divideth flames of fire;
The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness,
The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve and discovereth the forests.

Another characteristic of Hebrew poetry was the use of the question. It served to add variety to the poet's style, to create an atmosphere of mystery or sadness. For example, the fate of captive Israel is shown in all its pathos when the psalmist asks:

How shall we sing Jehovah's song
In a strange land?

The mystery of God's ways is increased with the haunting question:

Whither shall I flee from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

Perhaps the most beautiful and characteristic trait of Hebrew poetry is the use of poetic figures of speech. By nature imaginative and observant, the Hebrew poets replaced an unnecessary description by simplicity of style and poetic imagery. "The realistic and concrete imagination of Hebrew writers, their sensitiveness to nature in all its manfold aspects, their feeling for their homeland, their intense concern with all the details of daily life—these furnished the substance for their images, for their quick and apt comparisons of one thing with another."

Take, for example, the first verse of Psalm XIX; one of us would say, "Nature gives evidence of the glory of God." Not so the poet: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." The psalmists reflect over and over again the life in a dry and thirsty land where even the shadows cast by great rocks are welcome shelter from the heat of the summer sun. God is compared to a rock; they long for Him as they long for water, or "as the hart panteth for the water brooks." Psalm CIV is a veritable masterpiece of poetic imagery:

Thou art clothed with honor and majesty;

(*Continued on page* 38)

Everything, Everywhere

ANN PERRY

JIMMY BLINKED, then sat up in his bed. Something had wakened him, but he didn't know what. Spot, his dog, was still asleep at the foot of his bed; so nothing could be wrong. He tried to brush aside a light that fell on his face; then he realized that it was a moonbeam. "It must have been the moon," he thought, "that made me wake up." He hugged his knees and felt the warmth of his covers close about him. His back was cold where the covers didn't meet, but the rest of him was warm. As he sat there, the moonlight made his room look strange. The dark corners were much farther away than they usually were, but around his bed it seemed close and comfortable.

"It's Christmas Eve," Jimmy whispered, his voice company in the strangeness of being awake at night. He slipped out of bed and felt on the floor for his slippers. After he had put them on, he pulled his blue bathrobe close around him. Spot stirred and looked at him; so Jimmy gathered her up in his arms and went over to the window. She was warm and fuzzy against his face as he laid it on her.

"Spot," he whispered, "the whole world's Christmas tonight. The moon is Christmas, and the snow down there is Christmas, and the trees are Christmas. And you're Christmas, and I am, too." Christmas was in the front yard as he looked out the window. The snowman he had built was guarding it, and the fort he had defended against Jingo's snowballs was alive with it. The street with its ruts and ridges was a silver world of mountains and valleys, new patterns shaping and disappearing as snow began to fall.

He held Spot closer against him and silenced the jingle of her collar as he slipped out of his room and through the hall. He knew exactly which steps creaked, and he counted breathlessly to himself as he went down the staircase. Spot was suddenly very much awake when Jimmy got to the bottom of the steps and wanted to get down, but he held her tight. He was afraid that she might break another of the balls on the Christmas tree as she had done that afternoon. He sat down in his father's easy chair and watched the fading embers of the fire. They were turning gray now, and there was very little warmth in them.

Spot turned in his arms to scratch at a flea, and Jimmy started swinging his legs slightly back and forth. He didn't want to sit still any longer; Christmas was too exciting for that. He walked across the room with Spot still held close to him and stood by the Christmas tree. "Spot, they'd never know if I turned it on, would they?" he asked softly, and knelt down by the light plug. He pushed it into the socket and saw the tree come alive. Red, green, blue, yellow, the lights were shining. The tinted balls showed the

colors of the lights in their sides and mixed their own with them. Jimmy crouched on the floor and looked at his beautiful Christmas tree.

He heard a sound outside and walked over to the window to look out. The ruffled curtains at the window were white, but now there were streaks and splashes of silver in them from the reflected light of the snow. Jimmy couldn't see anything from the window and opened the door to see what he had heard. Ordinarily he was afraid to go out alone at night, but this was Christmas Eve. He chuckled softly in Spot's ear when the door opened without any noise. As he slipped out onto the front porch, he smiled for the beauty that he saw. Night was always pretty, and the snow falling made it even better, but Christmas Eve, with snow on the ground and in the air, was the loveliest thing that Jimmy had ever seen.

He walked down the front walk a little way to see what the noise had been. "Only a car around the corner," he decided. He turned to go back in and saw the tree gleaming through the window. "Christmas, Christmas, Christmas," he chanted. A snow flake fell on his cheek, and he felt the little drop of water that it left trickle down his face. He stooped and put Spot down on the sidewalk so that he could taste the fresh snow. It was even colder than he had expected, and a shiver ran down his back. He stood up, realizing that he was cold and wanted to go back to bed. Spot was not where he had put her; she must have gone back to the front porch. Spot did not like snow very much. Jimmy grinned because Spot did not understand that snow on Christmas Eve meant that Christmas Day would be happy.

As he walked back to the front porch, his slippers were so wet that they squished. "Gosh, Spot," he whispered, "I'm cold, and—." But Spot was not on the front porch. Jimmy looked all over the front porch and down the sidewalk, but he couldn't find her. "She must be over in the vacant lot," he said to himself because he was worried about where she might be now. He walked across the yard, the trail of his footprints an uncertain line. "Spot, Spot," he called softly at the edge of the lot. All he heard in answer was the brittle hiss of the snow falling in frozen weeds. "Gee, Spot, come back. Here, Spot." He listened again, more afraid all the time. When Spot didn't come, he ran back to the front walk, not knowing what to do. He didn't want to wake his parents and ask them to help him find Spot because they would ask questions, and that would make everything he had done sound silly. But he knew that he couldn't leave Spot alone out here in the night.

"Spot, please come back," Jimmy called her softly again, "Spot, Spot." He went back to the porch steps and sat down. He had ruined his wonderful Christmas now, for he had lost Spot. Jimmy scrubbed at his eyes with the palms of his hands and shivered in the cold. Suddenly he felt something warm and damp on his cheek. He turned, and there was Spot, trying to lick his face. He swept her up in his arms, happy again. "Oh, Spot," he whispered, "I guess Christmas will be all right after all."

As he sat there hugging Spot close, a bell rang somewhere. He stood up, wondering. "It must be Christmas now," he said as more rang out. Christmas was everywhere for him again as Spot snuggled close in his arms: in the snow falling, in the Christmas tree shining through the window, and in the little brown dog in his arms. "Everything is Christmas," he murmured; "everything, everywhere is Christmas now." And the bells rang on through the night.

Grammy

GRACE LYONS

TO HER three grandsons and one granddaughter she is "Grammy;" to her hundreds of friends she is "Granny Grace;" to her many colored friends she is "Miss Grace;" but to all she is a plump little woman with graying hair, clear snappy brown eyes, dimples, and an infectious laugh. Few who have been in her presence for even a little while have failed to see in evidence her witty mind, her keen sense of humor, and her quick tongue ever ready with timely puns. It is one of her choice pranks to shock you by declaring that she will soon celebrate her seventieth birthday, for she knows only too well that her appearance and amazing vitality have already led you to surmise that she couldn't be much over fifty.

Grammy's little house, situated in the country about two miles from a small Tennessee town, has, as she likes to put it, "the latch key hanging on the outside." Through its door pass country and city friends, congressmen, wealthy acquaintances, humble folk in worn clothes, and the beloved members of her own immediate family. All are welcomed and made to feel at home by her unaffected hospitality and her love for and interest in others which seem to be an inherent part of her being.

To me, Grammy is the epitome of all grandmothers. From the bank of my childhood memories I draw recollections of pleasant summers spent at the "big house" with my brother and two cousins; of trips to the pantry that satisfied a child's wildest dreams of treats and rich goodies; of rainy afternoons spent in the West Room feeding our imaginations with explorations through old trunks and dusty boxes holding every possible romantic relic of a life once lived but now gone; of frequent appearances at the side window of the bank where Grammy worked to beg nickels for ice-cream cones on dusty summer afternoons; of trips to Chicago and the Smoky Mountains; of her Sunday visits to our home with the inevitable basket of surprises over her arm; of Christmases at the "big house;" of memorable evenings spent before the huge fireplace, roasting nuts and popping corn; and most of all, of long talks with Grammy, never to be forgotten, through which we learned to think less of self and more of God and the world and others; and through which we gained wisdom and understanding to prepare us to look at the world through honest eyes and to see ourselves as others see us.

When apparently quite suddenly Grammy no longer was a soft lap in which to cuddle or an old-fashioned skirt at which to tug, but was a dear little woman amazingly several inches below our noses, she became more than just a source of nickels and a house to go to in summers and on holidays. She became ever-ready ears into which we poured confidingly our secret problems and questions and matters of aching hearts; we found in her such

a source of wisdom and unprejudiced advice that it became a part of our lives to turn confidently to that source which has never yet failed to satisfy; she became a group of ideals and a set of standards that we used as a yardstick by which to measure our own; and she became one of the most beloved and admired persons in our lives; for with the putting away of child-like ways and the awakening of adult vision and comprehension, we learned to know Grammy anew. Only then did we begin to be aware of the life of her past which had made her what she was. We began to remember snatches of stories told to us on the evenings before the big fireplace when sometimes our heads had nodded and we had missed precious details, and cherished moments when sentiment led her to display some treasure of that past life—an old picture album, a piece of jewelry, a letter or two, a garment that brought tears of memories, and countless curios from all over the world. In youthful curiosity but sincere interest we began to question her and found that she was almost pathetically eager to tell the story of her life, to us so like that of a story book.

Having been born in Rogersville, Tennessee, on August 19, 1875, and left an orphan in San Francisco when just a little girl, she traveled east by train in the care of a faithful old Negro mammy to take up her life in the "big house" in Rogersville. There she was brought up in the atmosphere of an old Southern home by a maiden aunt and colored slaves. As a young girl she was quite beautiful, in spite of the distressing freckles sprinkled over her tilted nose, and she was once crowned the belle of Hawkins County at the County May Day Festival. Grammy had many beaus, she tells you with a proud little lift of her chin, but one Pitser Lyons with his black curly hair and big blue eyes captured her heart. Pit's proposal came to her in the form of a twelve-page letter which she still has, and she married him when she was nineteen. What a wedding day that was! And the next few years were by far the happiest in Grammy's life, for she gave birth to two boys and was the object of a handsome and adoring husband. Her perfect happiness was short-lived, however, for suddenly at the age of twenty-seven her young husband died with pneumonia after they had been married only six years.

Thus it was that when most young women were just settling down to a life of happiness and protection, Grammy, as a young widowed mother, set out to make a living for her small family and the maiden aunt who had reared her. Then it was that she first exhibited the courage, stability, and the dogged determination that were so much a part of her. She took a small job in the Citizen's Bank at Rogersville and has never stopped working there. By strictest economy, much sewing on of patches, scanty meals for herself, and a great amount of faith and optimism, Grammy managed to provide the necessities of life and education for her family. She weathered freezing winters and blistering summers, epidemics and childhood diseases, and periods when finances seemed about to topple, all with the characteristic cheerfulness and forgetfulness of self that soon endeared her to all who knew her. Her eldest son at fourteen ran away to join the navy, but soon came home again, rewarding her faith in him and her prayers for him. The first world war came and took away from her for awhile her two boys just reaching maturity. Gray then began to streak her hair. When her boys returned, however, life again took on meaning.

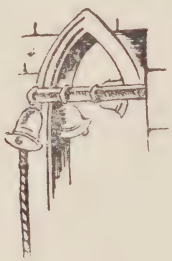
And then the eldest boy, Hugh, married. Grammy would not go to the wedding. It wasn't that she did not approve of Mae; she just didn't want to cry in front of all those people, and cry she knew she would. The next year she held in her arms her first grandchild, my brother. That day, she says, her life really began.

There followed in due course the marriage of the youngest son, the birth of a second grandson, my loud arrival, and the birth of the third and last grandson. And from then on Grammy's entire life seemed centered on her four small grandchildren. For them she worked, kept the "big house" open, saved her money for their birthdays and Christmases, and traveled miles to see them.

The long illness and death of the maiden aunt, the death of her only brother, the depression, the giving up of the "big house" for her small country home, and finally the tragic death of her eldest son etched heavy lines in Grammy's face; but through it all the strength of her inner self shone through and no one but her will ever know the depth of her sorrow and suffering during those times.

Meanwhile the four grandchildren had gone through the varied stages of growing up and had, as Grammy put it, "gone over Fool's Hill." Then the world changed. War came. The three grandsons put on navy uniforms. The granddaughter talked glowingly of the WAVES, but was finally persuaded to continue her education, at least until she became of age. The youngest boy soon went across and was followed by the eldest, and Grammy began to look for letters from the South Pacific. The second grandson finished his training and married his childhood sweetheart. Grammy went to the wedding of Pitser the Third and managed to sit through it all, whitefaced, but not crying.

Tonight, although the world has again found peace, Grammy is probably baking her last cherished ham in preparation for a visit from her second grandson on his last furlough before going overseas. To him she will be the same Grammy, moving busily around the house humming a jaunty little tune, proudly fixing all his favorite dishes, making plans with him that have to do with the future and his young wife, asking him about his work, charging him to uphold the best that he knows in whatever he does and wherever he goes, and finally bidding him goodbye with a smile and one last teasing crack to send him away chuckling. That's Grammy!



Joe

FLORA ANN NOWELL

He was one born to love the sun and soil
And growing things, and all that goes to make
A farm; he did not mind the drudging toil—
Instead he liked to work with hoe and rake
And plow with tractor through the soft red earth.
He liked to rise at dawn to tend his stock,
Or stay till late at night, awaiting birth
Of calf or colt. He was not one to mock
The modern ways; instead he wished the best
Of all equipment when he should grow old,
Enough to have a farm to call his own,
A little plot to till, a wife to scold
And keep him straight—he wanted this alone.
But this he never had; he got instead
A well-aimed German bullet through his head.

The Secret

BETTY BARBER

Say, did you know that I'm an elf?
I found it out all by myself,
When I went out to walk one day
I heard a little fairy say,
"Bend down and let me talk to you;
I want to tell you something true
That no one knows about at all."
So I stooped down—you see I'm tall—
I'm almost five and big and strong;
I'll start to school before so long—
But anyway, this fairy said
As she reached up and touched my head,
"I bet you didn't know that you
Are just a little fairy too,
Except I guess you are an elf
Since you're a little boy, yourself."
And then the fairy flew away,
But now just since that lovely day
I know that what she said is true
Although I dreamed it up, don't you?

Taffy Randy

ANN EMERSON

RANDY rushed for the ringing telephone with vigor. With her hand on it, she let it ring four times before answering it. Aunt Miranda, whose namesake Randy was, snorted with warning impatience from the next room. Randy resignedly lifted the receiver. No use giving the outside world the idea one was camping by the phone waiting for it to ring. Her "yes-s-s-?" was drawled in a casual, uninterested voice very much in variance with her haste in reaching the phone.

Her caller's voice was not the one she had been dreaming of all day. Next best, however, it was her intimate friend, Joan Miller. Randy and Joan had shared Spanish and psychology classes that morning. Obviously, they were most inconvenient places at which to discuss topics of vital interest, unless, surprisingly, one's most vital interests centered in Spanish and psychology. For the moment at least Joan's and Randy's definitely did not.

"Has Jimmy called you yet?" asked Joan.

"No-o," said Randy regretfully. Then breathlessly, "Why? Is he going to? Has Frank called you?"

"Just finished talking to him," smugly answered Miss Miller. "He said Jimmy forgot his toilet kit and had to go back after it, which is probably why you haven't heard from him. Honestly, when I think how close I came to not going to church last evening. And there was dear old Mrs. Webb with those two grand-looking boys. Wasn't it simply swee-et of her, I mean rea-lly swe-et, to ask us to go home with her and make waffles.

"It was grand," agreed Randy. But there was a slight under-current of dejection in her voice. "I am afraid Jimmy didn't really like me as well as I thought he did, though. Looks like he could have called me when Frank called you." She peeped into the looking glass above the phone table as though to ask the mirrored Randy wherein the failure lay. She noted critically that her blond page-boy curved enticingly correct where her neck joined her shoulders. Her figure had sweet lines if she did admit it to herself. She could, and did, upon the slightest provocation expose her large, even white teeth in a spontaneous wide smile, that was, she had been led to believe, definitely charming. Her short lashed eyes were grey-green, and not a super asset like the other enumerated points, but they rolled surprisingly well.

Her friend hastened to reassure her. "Oh, he did too, Randy. Frank said Jimmy just raved about you. Said you are the snazziest blonde. Frank said they would be up from camp next week-end again. Mrs. Webb has invited them. They knew her grandson who was killed in Germany. It's just because Jimmy forgot his kit and had to go back after it that you haven't heard from him. They went to the station about the time we got home from school."

Teeth, hair, and eyes, which had been drooping, sprang to life at Randy's end of the phone.

"My sa-akes," she exclaimed happily. "Did he really, Joan? I think he is the nicest thing. I just lo-ove that boy."

Another snort issued from Aunt Miranda's vicinity. It was one of the thorns of Randy's life that Aunt Miranda's day had seen its zenith when coyness was the keyword of a young lady's behaviour. The likes and opinions of Aunt Miranda's "Pa," whom Randy had never had the pleasure of knowing personally, had been aired in her presence so many times she felt she could unerringly have picked the old gentleman out of a multitude.

Randy cast a weather eye in Aunt Miranda's direction. (That lady was quite capable of repeating conversations she considered questionable to Mom, with what her Pa would have thought and done thrown in gratuitously.) However, Randy did not allow the thought to dampen her enthusiasm for the Frank-Jimmy theme.

"Didn't they have the lov-el-iest manners, Joan? I just adored the way Frank seated Mrs. Webb at the table before he sat down. And Jimmy worrying about her being in a draft and getting her shawl for her. Joan, did Jimmy say his father is a poet?" she digressed from her paean of praise to inquire with sudden curiosity.

"Hm-n, I believe he did, come to think of it," said Joan. "Frank's father is a minister. O Randy, he said when he found the right girl, he wanted his father to tie the knot. Isn't that the sweetest expression? Wouldn't that be the most thrilling experience? To be married by your own future father-in-law. That was when Jimmy said something about his father, and I believe he did say he is a poet. Do you suppose he supports his family writing poetry?"

"My sa-akes," trilled Randy, "I don't know. It would be marvelous, I think, to write about roses and moonlight and the scent of lilacs in a country lane and actually get money for it to buy steaks and chops." A surprised half snort, this time of laughter, from Aunt Miranda showed Pa hadn't completely suppressed her sense of humor. Her niece heard her and rolled her eyes indignantly at Randy in the mirror. "O Joan, wouldn't it be awful if Jimmy doesn't call or write or anything? I don't know when I have ever met a boy who appealed to me so much. I'm going to study some poetry tonight. He most likely loves it, if his daddy is a poet. My sa-akes, I probably better start with something simple like 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star.'"

Eventually, after more reassurances from Joan and tentative plans for the week-end, should the lads make good their promise to return, Randy replaced the receiver. Hardly had she done so than the phone rang. Not forgetting her practice of letting it ring several times, she almost dropped it when from its subterranean depths issued a hurried masculine voice.

"Hello, is this Randy? This is Jimmy, Randy. I've been trying to get you for twenty minutes. Frank's out here holding the bus-driver by main force so he won't drive away without me. But I had to tell you that I certainly enjoyed last night, Taffy-hair. We're coming down next week-end. May I call you? Will you save a week-end date for me? Hurry and tell me, Taffy-Randy. That bus is going."

"I'll save it, Jimmy. Goodbye." A hurried "Bye now" and a click told her the bus had refused to wait longer.

Randy shuddered mentally when she realized how close she had come to missing this phone call. Furthermore, she thought wrathfully, if she had

had a mite more time, doubtless she could have worked in a verse or two of poetry at some place in the conversation. Upon further consideration, perhaps it was just as well she hadn't because the only poem she could remember well enough to quote from at the moment was Grey's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," which she had memorized last year in high school. "The plowman homeward plods his weary way" was a bit on the melancholy side for the occasion.

She heard her mother come into the kitchen from the car which she had parked at the back door, her arms full of groceries. Randy wandered kitchenward, her mind turning over points of a campaign she was beginning to map out. Oddly, or perhaps naturally enough, young Sgt. Jimmy Kosnic's mind was at the moment dwelling on much the same subject. In fact, his face was in such a brown study, a fellow civilian bus-rider wondered if rehabilitation was worrying the young sergeant. He began formulating a letter in his mind he meant to get off to his congressman at once.

Randy began her offensive without delay. "Mother, did you ever know a poet?" she inquired, picking off a grape and biting into it with her two white front teeth.

"No Randy," said her mother absently, her head partly in the refrigerator, and her voice coming from its depths.

"And why she'd want to, I can't think," sniffed Aunt Miranda from the sink, busily stripping off the undesirable leaves from the lettuce heads. "Pa always said a man who would take up picture daubing and word rhyming for an occupation was either incurably lazy or lacking in wits."

Randy rolled her short lashed orbs indignantly at Aunt Miranda and by proxy at her Pa. That man and his meddling!

"My sa-akes, Aunt Miranda. I have a friend whose father is a poet. I know my friend isn't half-witted. He's a sergeant, and Mrs. Webb thinks he is a lovely boy. I would like to ask him to dinner next Saturday night, mother. But my sa-akes, I better not if we are going to insult his father's occupation."

Mrs. Jackson jumped into a familiar role of pouring oil on troubled waters.

"Why, it will be very nice to have him. Mrs. Webb told me about the boys. Now, let's see. Perhaps Aunt Miranda will whip up one of her chocolate cakes. Boys love chocolate cake. And how about having something he doesn't get at camp? Your cousin John said he used to wake up dreaming of sauerkraut and pigs' feet. I wonder if he would like that, too?"

"Oh, Mo-o-ther," squealed Randy, "that is so horribly vulgar. Feeding a poet's son the feet of an old pig. Larks' tongues, honey, and ambrosia are a poet's food." Mrs. Jackson wondered inaudibly where Randy planned to purchase the menu, and Aunt Miranda shook the lettuce with vigor and ejaculated audibly, "My stars and stripes!"

"I am afraid we'll have to serve more prosaic food than that; perhaps fried chicken or roast beef," said Mrs. Jackson.

"And Mother," pursued Randy, "couldn't we all brush up on our knowledge of poetry so we would have something interesting to talk about? Do you suppose you could persuade Dad to read Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales' and memorize a page or two of it? And maybe you and Aunt Miranda and I could each learn something from Keats, Shelley, and Poe. Aunt Miranda could take the 'Bells.' That's terribly easy."

(*Continued on page* 41)

Through The Needle's Eye

B. Jean Fant

THERE comes a time in almost every girl's life when, either through necessity or choice, she has to thread a needle. In view of this fact it seems rather strange that there have been no books written, no lectures given, and no instructive articles published concerning this vital act. The difficulties are plain; but, armed with a few facts, the average person should be able to face the problem intelligently.

The first step in threading a needle is to find a quiet, peaceful spot in which to perform this delicate operation. After a few minutes of diligent search a college freshman will find that her dormitory is about as quiet as Grand Central Station and that her best bet is to lock herself in the bathroom and fervently hope that her roommate's radio has burned out all its tubes.

After the setting has been chosen, the materials to be used must be gathered. Aside from the obvious essentials of the needle and the thread, the thoughtful person will be prepared both mentally and physically for the ordeal ahead. A composed, happy state of mind, a steady hand, patience, and above all a sense of humor are vital for a successful needle-threader. By no means should the novice attempt to start without first taking the precaution of examining the needle and being positive that it has an eye. This step can save many hours of eyestrain and many miles of frayed nerves.

After being locked in the bathroom with the necessary materials, one should find a spot in which the light is good and, with firm hand and strong heart, proceed. If one is right handed, the needle should be grasped, eye upward in the left hand and the thread held, end forward, in the right. If one is left handed, the positions should be reversed. It is at this point that many people are confused by the question of which hand to move first. This is rather like the often asked question, "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?", in that it makes not the slightest bit of difference. One should remember, however, that the object is to thread the needle and that trivialities must not be allowed to cloud the goal.

Surmising that the needle and thread are now in close proximity, we meet our next major obstacle, the frizzled end. In most cases when the thread end has spread so that it cannot be put through the eye of a needle, a pair of scissors can never be found; so a practical needle-threader will learn to rely on resourcefulness at this point. Some people insist that one should examine the other end of the thread to see if it will not have a better point. Others maintain that a quick lick of the tongue on the frizzled edge will put things to rights without the necessity of the extra operation. One of these two methods will usually work.

A calm, deliberate thrust will accomplish more than a quick jab, it has been found. Using a jab stroke, one finds that the end of the thread will more than likely be bent, thus presenting a further annoyance which can be avoided.

After about ten thrusts, it is advisable to stop and do five deep knee-bends, thus calming the jangled nerves. (This, of course, is completely ignoring the fortunate individual who is successful upon his first try.) When all these steps have been taken and the needle is still minus thread, no further advice can be given except to try, try again. After a few minutes of this tedious work one is tempted to seek outside help or to use some mechanical means. This, however, is the sissy's way out and will not even cross the mind of the strong willed individual.

When success has finally been achieved, it is better never to mention one's accomplishment, or someone might ask you to thread one for her.

Unuttered

GRACE LYONS

Within my soul still hidden lies
A thought, as yet unborn.
I am as woman yet with child
Who, knowing well its presence,
Still cannot tell by meager words
Its form or final fate.
Full well I know that one sole life
Is mine to live and lose;
And this the only age to mark
My swiftly passing through.
Would that mine were the golden tongue
Of Browning, Keats, or Shelley;
Then from the surging of my soul
In jeweled words I'd paint
The thoughts that now content must be
To lie unuttered—burning.
One life, one age, one gift bequeathed
That men might better be.
To know that one soul's fetters broke,
That a heart began to sing.
There will not flow from off my pen
A noble book, I know;
Nor is it mine the gift to form
A sonnet for the soul.
But in my heart is no despair
When on my lack I ponder,
Perhaps a greater book or poem
The life I live will render.

Robert Browning: Rugged Individualist

JUNE HOLDER

SHOULD you question the average layman for his definition of a poet, his reply would probably be akin to the following: A poet is an effeminate, sallow-faced idealist, who sees the world in terms of iambics and dactyls and is about as practical as an Olympian god. For examples, he might offer Edgar Allan Poe, representing death and the airy spirit world, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, portraying romantic fantasy in such lines as "Kubla Khan." But you might reply to your friend that a poet is also a man, and that very few men indeed lack entirely their practical side. Even Poe and Coleridge at times were normal, every-day gentlemen—Poe, a hard-working critic and newspaperman; Coleridge, an excellent lecturer and critic. Hence, the traditional idea about a poet is not entirely true. The reason, perhaps, for this misconception is that posterity sees the poet but never knows the man; and so the poet as a human being is constructed in the imagination according to the work that he has left. And the contributions of most poets do lend themselves very aptly, indeed, to this conventional conception. Thus the world in general never knows the other side of the man who is a poet; it recognizes only the part of him which produced his poetry.

But there is one poet in English literature whom the world has never attempted to conform to this traditional pattern; for Robert Browning, the poet and the man, are the same throughout. Consequently, his work denies kinship with that of the usual poet; for it is the production of an objective optimist. How many poets can claim to be an extrovertive lover of people —a buoyant enthusiast for the simple game of living? How many would *want* to lay such a claim? But it was Browning's theory that a poet should be an observer rather than a dreamer. A poet should report life, and life consisted of people as well as daisies and skylarks. Browning was thus masculine, optimistic, and extrovertive. What would your average layman think of a poet who was as much at home chatting over the soup at a dinner party as while driving his pen across the paper in the ecstasies of poetic composition? But that was Robert Browning—a poetic soul—minus the dreamy contemplation of life and plus a practical, everyday knowledge of men and women.

In analyzing this individuality of Browning, one sees many idiosyncrasies and whimsicalities in his technique. The style of Browning, indeed, is often startling in its unpoetic roughness—the quality in his work which has been described as "fuzzy, prickly, and tangled." Such a line as the following from "Rabbi Ben Ezra" describes this quality to perfection:

Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the
maw-crammed beast?[1]

But Browning, of course, is not always rough and grotesque. His "pearly rain,"[2] his "mile of warm sea-scented beach,"[3] and his imaginative

hands unseen
Were hanging the night around us fast,[4]

indeed almost equal a few of the poetic figures used by the Romantic poets. But Browning is not primarily a poet of lyric and pictorial beauty.

There are several ways in which the poet achieves his generally erudite, unusual style besides his choice of such words as "irks" and "maw-crammed." One of these is the transposed sentence order, for which Browning has been greatly criticized. Not only does this quality add to the unattractiveness of his work, but it also increases the obscurity of that work. For instance, let us consider the following:

Wherever could thrust
Some burnt sprig of bold hardy rock-flower
Its yellow face up,
For the prize were great butterflies fighting.[5]

Some transposition, of course, is necessary to poetry; but in Browning it occurs so frequently that the result seems often a meaningless hodge-podge of words. Few poets indeed ever dared such license!

Another factor in Browning's unusual style is his rhyme and coined words. In order to secure a needed rhyme-word, he may either employ some foreign phrase or use a "fill-in" expression which is obviously important only to the meter; or he may even invent his own meaningless word. For example, observe the following two selections:

Blasted lay that rose-acacia
We're so proud of! Hy, Zy, Hine . . .
'St, there's Vespers! Plena gratia
Ave Virgo! Gr-rr- You swine![6]

There may be heaven: there must be hell.
Meantime, there is our earth here—well![7]

Thus, in the above, "*Hine*" is a Browning invention; "*gratia*" is from the Latin; and "well!" is but a metrical necessity. Nor is the poet averse to coining his own words for internal use in the line. The "star that dartles the red and the blue"[8] is a very unique star indeed, for it does what no other celestial body can—it "dartles." And so Browning is much more free in his rhyme and general use of words than almost any other poet ever dared to be; and this fact helps to explain his flaunting, bizarre style.

Browning's great store of miscellaneous information is another factor in the cause for his unusual style. Highly technical terms relating to music, botany, and painting adorn his poems throughout, making a Browning

1 1. 24.
2 "By the Fireside," 1.149.
3 "Meeting at Night," 1.7.
4 "By the Fireside," 1.231-232.
5 "The Englishman in Italy," 1.28-31.
6 "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," 1.69-72.
7 "Time's Revenge," 1.65-66.
8 "My Star," 1.8.

encyclopedia almost indispensable to the student of Browning. For instance, of the musician, Galuppi, he declares:

> *Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths*
> *diminished, sigh on sigh,*
> *Told them something? Those suspensions,*
> *Those solutions—"Must we die?"*
> *Those commiserating sevenths—"Life might last!*
> *We can but try!"*[9]

Who indeed but a musician could understand the poet's entire meaning in this stanza? Another example of this use of obscure knowledge is seen in the painters in "Old Pictures in Florence." How many other poets fill their work with such a diverse mass of detailed information? How many could?

And so through his word-choice, sentence structure, and miscellaneous allusions, Browning has built a style of striking buoyancy and masculinity—the factors of which help to explain his grotesque roughness and his vivid, conversational tone. However, such poetry, although it certainly lacks the majesty of a Milton, the lyricism of a Shelley, or the philosophy of a Wordsworth, cannot but impart a certain charm and singular pleasure to the reader —all the more pleasing because it is so very *different.* There, indeed, has never been another Robert Browning in the history of English poetry.

The subject matter of Browning's verse also testifies to his uniqueness. It must be borne in mind, first of all, that Browning *technically* was a Victorian poet. A contemporary of the typically Victorian-English Tennyson, he also by all the laws of environment should have borne the earmarks of this age of "high seriousness"— its English conservatism, its dripping emotionalism, and its stern didacticism. But Browning was anything but a preaching sentimentalist. Occasionally, it is true, he introduced a mawkish note, as in "A Woman's Last Word," or drove home a lesson, as in "The Statue and the Bust." But even when he did, the Victorian note was so cloaked with the style and the thought of Robert Browning that it was hardly recognizable as Victorian. It is, indeed, true as has been said, that Browning wore his Victorian clothes inside out in order to appear original.

Nor was Browning particularly an English poet in his work, and in this characteristic he is again the direct contrast to Tennyson. For, instead of the romantic days of the English Arthur, Browning expounds in his verse the Italian Renaissance. What a contrast indeed is "The Bishop Orders His Tomb" to "The Passing of Arthur!" In fact, only in the two "Home Thoughts" poems does Browning display a nostalgic love for the country of his birth; and, as a rule, he is entirely un-British. This "frisking little gentleman" inhabits rather the climes of the South. In fact, he himself has declared:

> *Italy, my Italy!*
> *Queen Mary's saying serves for me—*
>
> *Open my heart and you will see*
> *Graved inside of it, "Italy."*[10]

Thus, Robert Browning was truly not a man of his times. Neither English nor Victorian in subject matter, he was certainly more cosmopolitan

9 "A Toccata of Galuppi's," 1.17-21.
10 "De Gustibus," 1.39-4; 42-48.

than most writers; for how many poets were thus separated from their age? To be sure, Wordsworth was universal. Chaucer was at least two hundred years ahead of his day; and Shakespeare was the poet for all time. But each of these also revealed his own age and country; Browning seldom did. He was an Englishman, but his local color was Italian. And he lived in the Victorian age, but his portrayals of human nature were of all time.

In the subject of nature Browning also revealed his individuality, for he possessed a habit of discussing in one stroke of the pen objects of nature which were most painfully discordant. The poem, "Garden Fancies," is perhaps the best example of this feature. In the first portion of the poem the poet discusses a beautiful girl among the conventional beauties of a flower garden. The second part, however, treats some extremely unpoetic objects in nature—toads, owls, beetles, and worms. Again, in a lovely lyrical passage in *Pippa Passes*, the poet indulges in this process:

The bee with his comb,
The mouse at her dray,
The grub in his tomb,
While winter away;
But the fire-fly and the hedge shrew
and the lob-worm, I pray,
How fare they?[11]

No other poet would dare combine such ideas if he were at all sensitive about his work.

Browning, indeed, cherished a peculiar fondness for the unusual and unpleasant aspects of nature; and in many poems this quality is sustained rather than merged with the poetic. The "Childe Roland" is an excellent example of this characteristic. Such lines as "As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair in leprosy,"[12] and "Bog, clay and rubble; sand and stark black dearth"[13] show the whimsical, bizarre Browning at his best. However unpleasant or disillusioning to the sensitive reader such a practice may be, he must also be somewhat amused at the ostentatious Mr. Browning and decide ultimately that the grotesqueness is but another way in which Robert Browning attracts attention.

But not only is Browning rough and masculine in his choice of natural objects; he also humanizes nature. That is, he endows a rose with the ability to lift its head and smile like a maiden; whereas the poetic soul would declare that the young girl's smile contained the brightness of the sun-lit rose. In the same "Garden Fancies," for example, he describes a flower thus:

This flower she stopped at, finger on lip,
Stooped over, in doubt as settling its claim.[14]

On the other hand, we may consider William Cullen Bryant's description of a *natural* woman:

The twilight of the trees and rocks
Is in the light shade of thy locks.
Thy step is as the wind, that weaves
Its playful way among the leaves.

(*Continued on page* 40)

11 Pippa Passes, "Night."
12 Ibid, 1.73-74.
13 Ibid, 1.150.
14 Ibid, 1.17-18.

Mister Man

BETTY BARBER

Well, how are you, my little man
How do you feel today?
Did you sleep well in your rosebud,
You seem to feel most gay.
I must admit you are quite mussed—
Your pansy coat is torn,
And, mister man, just look at you!
Your fox gloves are quite worn;
Your lady slippers are untied,
You must not brush your hair!
Really, mister pyxie man,
You certainly need care.
If I were just a fairy girl,
I think I'd marry you,
And then I'd make you dress quite neat
And make you look like new.

Autumn Color

BETTY BARBER

I know it was a playful elf
That lovely autumn painted;
When Mother Nature looked at first
I know she nearly fainted.
Such bold and saucy colors mixed
In many different ways,
And yet the blends that meet our eyes
Just really do amaze.
There're red and rust and green and brown
And yellow all in one;
Such brilliant glory painted here
Never before was done;
That elfin prob'ly didn't know
What joy he made appear
When just for spite he took his brush
And splashed it everywhere.

The Fir Tree

BETTY BARBER

The little fir tree stretched her limbs
And sighed a whispering sigh.
"I hope I'll be a Christmas tree
For Christmas by and by.
The others told me everything
A fir should know that day:
They'll dress me up in red and green,
And I will look quite gay.
Some sparkling lights my arms will hold;
With tinsel I will glow.
And all about my feet will lie
Mysterious gifts, I know.
The children small will squeal with glee
When they look up at me.
The grown-ups tall will smile and say,
"Just as it used to be."
I'm glad to know that I can give
My life in such a way,
As once a tree just such as I
In distant land one day
Did give her life on which He died,
Thus giving life to man.
So on His birthday I will give
All of myself I can
To bring to others happiness,
And all the hearts to fill
With joy and all that goes to make
A peace on earth, good will.

Fade Out

MARY MCGILL

MY HIGH HEELS clicked noisily on the cracked pavement, and I smiled smugly to myself as I swung down the shaded main street. How amusing to come back to this easy-going little town where ten years ago I was playing stealing chips with every little rascal in town, hiding broken dishes in the chicken feed, and spending grocery money to buy chocolate silver bells at Pender's. Yes, very amusing, I thought, ignoring the empty feeling at the bottom of me. Of course, it couldn't be exactly the same with Grandma gone and nobody living in the old house, but then everything else would be just as it used to be. I'd often thought of those days and wondered if every child was as supremely happy as I was then. Did every child have doting grandparents and teasing uncles, wide lawns to romp in and giant china-berries to climb on, and countless playmates to collaborate with on unimaginable schemes? Maybe so, but then not many people could come back after so long and see the old spots again, and have their memories refreshed—this was a peculiar privilege.

I came to the college inn and tried not to see the sunken roof and warped benches, tried to see only the long Saturday mornings spent peeping in the guests' rooms with Sallie. I squared my chin and hastened my slackening step. When I came to the little cemetery on the hill, I couldn't resist taking one look at the family plot, but wished violently I hadn't when I saw neat new markers for two war heroes—two heroes who used to be two little brothers just as busy thinking up mischief as we were. I realized I shouldn't let sentimental memories dim my day, but I wondered if the sun glow had not faded just a little as I walked past the gate back into the street.

There was Tula's house. I always thought her daddy was the richest man in the world; so it hadn't made me feel bad to demand thirty cents for my hand-made doll quilt. She'd had a brother, too, but he was three years older, and had a bicycle, and called us "kids." I was surprised to find her house rather commonplace and wished I could see her again so I wouldn't feel inferior.

The brick house across the street had a wide walk up to the door, and we always turned around there when we skated—we couldn't go beyond the block. I was getting nearer now and the feeling in my stomach was rather like the one when I moved to the new high school and dreaded hearing my name in the roll-call for fear my voice couldn't speak above the hammering of my heart. I caught a glimpse of the hedge and had a wild desire to run. I hadn't remembered it as being quite so high or so rugged, and the hole where we cut through to next door had grown over. I made my way through the opening and felt a lump well up in my throat until it hurt to swallow. The green grass I had my picnics on was thick high weeds; patches of clover crept

up between the sections of sidewalk that reminded me of nightly games of hop-scotch.

The porch looked empty without the big ferns and porch rockers, and even the swing had fallen down on one side. The windows looked bare without curtains, especially the one where we always put the Christmas tree. I made my way through the weeds and wandered around to the south side. There was the giant china-berry, but I wished I hadn't seen it. It was just that—well, it wasn't a giant one any more. The twin trunks weren't so phenomenal, and the broad limb Uncle Jack could lift us up to wasn't high at all. Even the branches seemed thin, and I wondered how they had protected us when we played in the rain in our bathing suits and went under them to "port" for tea cakes steaming hot from the oven. I couldn't stand up under the house any more, and I had to stoop to enter the cellar. The hollyhocks by the garden fence had died, and someone had torn down the muscadine vine.

I had intended to look through the back porch screen, but I felt my courage leave me. I didn't even have the nerve to visit our little brick playhouse. The wedding gown might still be hanging on the wall; it was only a mosquito net, but truly it was beautiful. The lump in my throat grew bigger, and something burned my eyes. I hurried back to the front and gasped with relief when I saw the rosebush. It was just a wild thing, but it had had beautiful white roses for Grandma on Mother's Day, and she let us decorate our playhouse every Sunday morning. We had even sold them for a nickel each one Saturday morning to make money for the circus the brothers up the street were giving—the brothers, yes, the heroes. And those same roses were blooming again. I turned and hurried out the walk as tears trickled down my face. One thought flashed across my mind: I could still remember the roses.

My high heels clicked quietly on the cracked pavement as I walked down the shaded street, disillusioned.

If I Could

Ann Perry

If I could paint the pictures that I see—
A fiery sun behind a purple hill,
A sailing ship upon a frothy sea,
A rotting wheel beside an ancient mill;
If I could tell the way I sometimes feel—
The deadening ache of all-consuming grief,
The steady thrill of living life that's real.
A moment that's as beautiful as brief—
If I could paint and tell these phantom things,
I'd have a fairy canvas traced in gold,
A soaring story or a tune that sings.
But when I try, my brain and hands turn cold.
I cannot sell my dearest thoughts and dreams,
For desolate my soul would be, it seems.

Armistice

FLORA ANN NOWELL

HERMAN SCHMIDT, teacher of German at Wimberly College, turned into the horseshoe drive in front of the small institution in his little coupe. His mind turned as usual to contemplating the difference between Wimberly and the University of Heidelberg, where he had been professor of English not so long ago. There his pupils had been earnest youths with a hard look and a sort of brutality in their eyes. Here they were girls—girls who giggled and discussed Frank Sinatra and new hair styles before class began. Yet Dr. Schmidt was far happier than he had ever been at Heidelberg, even during his student days; for he was by nature a very gentle person, and the German youths had frightened him just a little.

Dr. Schmidt was certainly not handsome. He was bald with the sloping forehead of a typical German and a large Roman nose. His lips were large and facile, and he still had trouble with his "W's" and "th's." His eyes and his smile were his best features, but they were so inter-related that one sometimes wondered whether his eyes, which were tiny, deeply set, and very blue, were really nice or only so when he smiled, which was often indeed. Oh, no, he was not good-looking, but he was so *sweet*. This was what the girls said about him when his name came up in their gossip groups, and they liked him very much. He knew that they liked him, and it gave him a very warm feeling about his heart to know that they did in spite of his name, which (because of some hidden pride) he refused to Americanize to Smith.

There was one girl, however, who did not like him—who hated him, in fact. She was in his second-year class, blond, very attractive, a good student; yet she literally glared at him throughout each class period. This puzzled him a great deal, but there seemed to be nothing that could be done about it.

On this particular morning, however, he did not give her a thought; and instead of the warm feeling around his heart, there was a very lonely feeling because of the yellow telegram that lay like a stone in his pocket. He supposed that he should have stayed at home, but he thought that perhaps teaching would keep his unhappiness from absorbing him too completely. The day went very well until fourth period when he had his second-year class. The blonde who disliked him seemed to be outdoing herself today. She read her translations with a more sarcastic tone than ever, and the hate that sparkled from her eyes made the pain in his already overburdened heart almost more than he could bear. The recitation dragged to a close, and to take up the rest of the class time he began telling them of some interesting German customs.

"Did you live in Germany all of your life?" asked one of the girls.

"Oh, no," he answered, "I am an American citizen, but I taught English in Germany for some time."

"Taught English in Germany," cried the girl; "what fun!"

"Fun!" shrieked the blonde, who was suddenly on her feet, triumph blazing from her eyes. "Do you call it fun to teach men to be spies? Don't you realize that his very pupils are probably over here now carrying on espionage? Maybe he is helping them." She turned towards him melodramatically and cried, "Traitor!'

Silence filled the room like a menacing cloud. Every eye was on him, and he knew that he must say something. His antagonist still stood with her chin up-tilted and a challenge in her eyes. He fumbled to his feet and wondered what he could say to justify himself—to make these, his pupils, like him again. His heart now felt as cold and empty as an iceberg, and his expressive lips were trembling.

"Perhaps you are right," he began; "perhaps some of my pupils are spies now, but I didn't know—I didn't realize—I—." He looked around the room and saw that he was making no impression on his audience. The amazement that had first possessed them had turned to downright hostility, and he was completely at a loss. It was then he remembered the telegram "Perhaps—."

"You may be right about me," he continued, "but you would have liked my brother, Karl. He was younger than I—so much younger that he could almost have been my son. When we first came to America, he had barely started school; whereas I had been a student at the University for three years. He caught on so quickly to the American ways, and he loved them deeply."

Dr. Schmidt began to smile as he went on re-living those far-away days when Karl was a boy—happy days of Boy Scouting, playing football, being valedictorian, dating the prettiest girl in town, and so forth.

"You see," he went on, "Karl was a *real* American. He even revolted when I told him of my offer to teach in Germany. Hitler had already come into power, and Karl did not like what he read of him. When I had to leave Europe almost at the risk of my life in '39, Karl said that it served me right. He was a senior in college taking pre-med and doing well when the Japs struck. He could have had a deferment, but he was the first in line at the recruiting office the very next day. He has been overseas a long time now—in Europe." He paused. "Today this came."

He removed the telegram from his pocket and read it through without a pause, but his voice quavered when he came to "killed in action." He looked up. Several of the girls were crying. "Class dismissed," he said quietly.

They all filed out without a word, all except the blonde. When she stopped by his desk, he saw that there were tears in her eyes.

"I'm so sorry," she said; "I know just how you feel. You see, my brother was killed, too. He was shot down over Germany. I wish he could have known Karl. I think they would have been good friends."

"I'm sure they would," said Dr. Schmidt. The warm feeling was tight around his heart again, and somehow even the telegram seemed less like a stone. He was glad that he had decided to come to school as usual today—very glad.

Book Reviews

John Steinbeck: The Red Pony

JUNE HOLDER

IT WAS westering and westering. Every man wanted something for himself, but the big beast that was all of them wanted only westering." It is thus that John Steinbeck describes the theme of his beautiful, emotional *Red Pony*. The author, well-known for his realistic portrayals of the American western scene, admirably develops this basic ideal of frontier life in his little volume about the inner longings of the boy, Jody.

Divided into four sections, each a complete short story within itself, *The Red Pony* is an artistic sketch of the soul of a boy. In each chapter he wants something very much—a red pony, a colt, knowledge of the great mountains and what is beyond them, and satisfaction of his curiosity about the early frontier days. But in each case he meets some disappointment. Finally, his entire attitude is clinched by the old grandfather who alone understands him and who explains Jody's own soul to the boy through his stories of the westward movement—that great progression in the days when the ideal in every man's heart was "westering," a search for the inevitable beyond. This inspirational concept—one of the bases of American thought and action—is thus presented in an original manner of construction and yet with charming simplicity.

This artlessness is indeed the quality which accounts for the appeal of the book. Not only is the basic motive of the whole fundamental in American psychology, but it is great because it is simple. As a background Steinbeck gives us, through a charmingly natural style, beautifully sustained pictures of the heart of childhood against the background of modern American ranch life. The little boy lives on a western farm with his parents. Like any boy he yearns for a pony, and he wants to care for it himself. But when adversity strikes, his interest, like that of any child, is quickly transferred to something else. In Jody's case it is the appearance of a mysterious old Mexican, Gitam, who arouses the boy's curiosity by his strange connection with the great black mountains just beyond the ranch. And there is also the humorous side to Jody. With the laughing heedlessness of childhood and to the horror of his mother, he fills his empty lunch-box with whatever he meets on his way home from school—a frog, a snake, bugs. Jody is indeed a normal little boy with a little boy's imagination and desires.

Jody's western surroundings are as unaffectedly and humanly drawn as he is. The farm tasks of feeding and currying the horses, the little scenes in the kitchen where Jody's mother is warmly sympathetic to his aspirations,

his father, kind but too practical to understand, and the hours the boy spends in the barn with lovable Billy Buck—all Steinbeck recounts with realism of detail. The author, indeed, may offend some readers with the definiteness of his description of Jody smashing a trick or horned toad. This is plain writing at its best—artistic, powerful, American. Steinbeck's deep human insight and love of the picturesque, presented through a direct, unaffected style, are indeed largely responsible for the appeal of the book; for with these secondary features he amplifies the basic theme of the volume.

The *Red Pony* is nostalgic, beautiful, emotional. But most of all, it has a message for every American today. We too should adopt the youthful spirit of our frontier forefathers and of the boy Jody—the simple but fundamental concept of "westering." Then for us life will be as it was for Jody and Grandfather, "as big as God."

Robert Molloy: Pride's Way

SUZANNE BLACKMON

ROBERT MOLLOY'S first novel, we sincerely hope, will not be his last. His *Pride's Way* is not a literary masterpiece, but it will undoubtedly launch him successfully on his way as a professional writer. A free lance writer, Mr. Molloy had been active in almost every sphere of the literary world before producing this novel.

The setting of *Pride's Way* is in Charleston, South Carolina, which was the birthplace of Mr. Molloy. It was also the city in which he attended school for some length of time; his close association with this city explains the excellent background he gives to his story. His keen insight has enabled him to give an authentic air of Charleston to his book—and an accurate revelation of the famed and fabled Charlestonian pride. *Pride's Way* is a satire—a satire on old age and pride, Charlestonian pride in particular.

The characters of the Gerard sisters, Miss Tessie and Miss Julie, are skillfully and shrewdly drawn; they are the most authentic old ladies to be found in recent literary work. From the very beginning Mr. Molloy exhibits unusually keen perception into the natures of human beings—his characters are truly realistic. The quarrels of Miss Tessie and Miss Julie, their reconciliation and the misery it brought, the home of Miss Julie's daughter into which the two old ladies came to live—all these situations evoke the reactions that one would expect from two such ancient bulwarks of Charlestonian pride as the Gerard sisters. In the beginning the reader will feel a somewhat serious concern for the estranged relationship of Miss Julie and Miss Tessie, but he soon becomes aware of the ridiculousness of it when it culminates in the wild insanity of Miss Tessie. In fact, the whole plot assumes a tantalizing air as the story progresses.

On the whole, the characters seem much stronger than the situations in which they find themselves. Mr. Molloy has handled his characters and his satire in particular as skillfully as an old master.

Editorials

Christmas, 1945

FOR THE first time in four years Christmas will be observed this year in a time of peace. This year there will be no blackouts, no bombings, no fear-ridden hearts. Instead of these there will be toys for children who have known no real Christmas, food for people who have been hungry, and love in the hearts of those who have been gripped by hate. This year Christmas will mean to us all the emotions and material things that we have lacked and wanted during the years of the war. Friends will be back again, families will be united again, and there will be rejoicing for the inhabitants of all Christendom.

But we must make our 1945 Christmas mean more than this. We should keep the time-honored customs and traditions, but we should have more than this. We must express the humble indebtedness that we feel to God and our fellowmen for our delivery from the war by true worship and thanksgiving in our churches and in our relations with others. If we come alive to the real meaning of Christmas this year, we cannot help making it the turning-point from war to real and lasting peace. We will make ours instead of a fearing, intolerant world, a creative world, moving into the long-dreamed-of era of peace and progress.

We must find the true spirit of Christmas, for it is only then that we can create a united world society as a monument to those who have given their lives to preserve the great season of Christmas.

The Atomic Age

THE ATOMIC era is a pressing reality. No longer can we say that it cannot happen, for it has happened. When the atomic bomb was dropped by an American airplane, America assumed the most awful responsibility that any nation has ever faced. We quite literally hold the future of the world in our hands today. If this new discovery is used wisely, the long dreamed of period of eternal peace and world-wide prosperity will in time be ushered in. If it is not handled sanely, the greatest era of chaos and human sacrifice that history has ever recorded will result.

Today we say that the price of human life is cheap, but if the atomic bomb and its derivatives are not turned into a useful channel, there will be no price on human life. When one man could sit in Washington, our capital city, press a button and obliterate a city in France, or Spain, or Russia, killing all the inhabitants and wiping out their material culture, what hope would there be for the world? And we cannot consder this in an abstract way, for it would not be "they" who would be involved, but it would be "we." Something concrete must be done now to control this agency either of destruction or of peace. It is the duty of every American citizen, every citizen of the world, to see that this is done; for we are the ones who would see the terrible results of atomic energy if it were allowed to bring on a third world war.

ANN PERRY

You Ask Me Why

GRACE LYONS

You asked me, dear, why I love you.
Can mere words answer this?
Can man make sky one whit more blue,
Or words describe a kiss?
Can artist on his canvas paint
A melody divine?
Or mortal man, aye, holy saint
The face of God define?
Can man by using his own will
Stop lungs from taking air?
Or poet with his ink and quill
His own soul's flight declare?
I cannot say—yet you and I
Know that my heart knows why!

Psalms As Literature

(*Continued from page* 12)

Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment;
Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain;
Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters;
Who maketh the clouds his chariot;
Who walketh upon the wings of the wind;
Who maketh wind his messengers;
Flames of fire his ministers;
Thou givest unto them, they gather;
Thou openest thy hand, they are satisfied with good;
Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled;
And taketh away their breath, they die;
And return to their dust.
Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created;
And thou renewest the face of the ground.

Note the high imaginativeness of these verses:

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring out of the earth; and the righteousness shall look down to heaven.

It is interesting to compare these verses with this stanza from Milton's "Ode On the Morning of Christ's Nativity."

Yea Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orbed in a rainbow; and like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace-hall.

To mention isolated verses:

The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance;
He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink;
Let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters;
Let not the waterflood overwhelm me,
Neither let the deep swallow me up;
And let not the pit shut its mouth upon me.

Out of the womb of the morning
Thou hast the dew of thy youth.

For my days consume away like smoke,
And my bones are burned as a firebrand.
My heart is smitten like grass, and withered;
For I forget to eat my bread.
By reason of the voice of my groaning
My bones cleave to my flesh.
I am like a pelican of the wilderness;
I am become as an owl of the waste places.

And so throughout the entire Book of Psalms. One is reminded constantly of a Shakespeare or a Milton in the gift of these poets to sway our emotions by rich, embellished language.

As a last test we can look at the Psalms in the light of Matthew Arnold's essay, "The Study of Poetry." "In poetry," Arnold says, "our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer stay. More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, and to sustain us." In the Psalms we can find an interpretation of life. We live in them the joys, the heartbreaks, the disappointments of the poets; and in their reactions to their experiences we see an interpretation of life—a life in its relation to a great, eternal plan. In the Psalms, too, we find consolation and sustenance. Certainly sorrows are not dissolved, but they do become more bearable when we remember that men are

as a sleep;
In the morning they are like grass which groweth up;
In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up;
In the evening it is cut down and withereth.

And who could feel utterly helpless when he reads:

God is our refuge and strength;
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the seas;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains tremble with the swelling thereof.
The Lord of Hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

It seems, then, that no one could deny the place of the Psalms in Hebrew and world literature. They not only serve to supplement the revelation of God, to establish a relationship between human and divine, but they present a wealth of poetic language and imagery, and have the power to strengthen and sustain with their depth and grandeur.

Blue

Betty Barber

I think my favorite color is
Just any shade of blue:
The blue that's up above us when
The daylight is quite new.
The blue of each forget-me-not
And violet that grows;
The bluest blue of rainbow hue,
The blue of twilight snows;
The baby blue of robins' eggs
The blue of mountain mist;
The blue of evening's mantle
When by the moon it's kissed;
The blue that's in the shallow pool
Which in the meadow lies;
But best of all the blue that's found
In baby's twinkling eyes.

Robert Browning: Rugged Individualist

(*Continued from page 27*)

Thine eyes are springs, in whose serene
And silent waters heaven is seen;
Their lashes are the herbs that look
On their young figures in the brook.[15]

What contrast could be more striking! Browning in the treatment of nature indeed differs from any other poet.

And, finally, we arrive at the one great subject matter of Browning's work—that of people. As we have noted before, Browning was the extrovertive poet of English literature—the man whose inherent nature compelled him to love his fellowman. It is only natural, then, that his work should reveal his native interest in life—human nature. And so, through the medium of the dramatic monologue, Browning characterizes such a varied assortment of humanity that his people form a sort of psychological pageant. Browning's dramatic monologues, considered collectively, indeed, may be thought of as forming a series of poetic case histories which the great psychiatrist, Browning, has constructed from his professional experience. His people usually complain of some psychological ailment, and every man and women that he creates is a human being. They speak as they naturally would—hence, the free, modern tone to the style; and they speak as real thwarted artists, real bishops, and real troubled lovers naturally would. Many appealing little pictures betray their characters; and in the art of compression of thought, Browning again excels. How very much, indeed, is packed into "Andrea del Sarto" and "A Grammarian's Funeral!" And, finally, these characters often express some note of Browning's optimistic philosophy in their monologues. Andrea del Sarto, David, and the grammarian's followers—all declare that the overtaking of one's ideals is one of the gravest tragedies of human life. How different is such a philosophy of hope and ambition fom the melancholy doubt and heaviness of many poets! And so, these characterizations are the essence of Robert Browning's greatness. His roughness, his vigor, his masculinity, his singular ostentatiousness—all are necessary to accomplish his one purpose—that of reporting life. And only through the dramatic monologue, which Browning perfected, could he have expressed this poetic purpose. No one, indeed, except Robert Browning could ever have left the world such an imaginative and realistic type of literature.

Thus, because Browning was so very different from all other poets, he has achieved greatness in the annals of English literature. He was a poet who never catered to the demands of his day. He wrote what he wished and simply did not care about its reception. He stood up for his ideals in poetry, and in this way he may be compared to his own Patriot or even Fra Lippo Lippi—real people who had the courage of their convictions. Such individualism is a great encouragement for freedom from literary bonds and chains; and because Browning defied literary convention, he was truly

One who never turned his back but marched
breast forward.[16]

15 "Oh, Fairest of the Rural Maids," 1.9-16.
16 Browning, "Epilogue," 1.11.

Taffy Randy

(*Continued from page* 21)

The very thought of her husband's attempting to quote early English poetry for the benefit of any young man was too much for Mrs. Jackson. She threw back her head and laughed heartily.

Surprisingly, it was Aunt Miranda who came up to scratch. "All the young ladies were required to learn poetry at Mrs. Castle's Seminary for Young Females," she announced tartly. "We had recitations each Friday. Pa thought it an important part of every girl's education. I'm sure I don't know what he would think of all this psychology and science nonsense the girls waste their time on now. I can assure you I will hold up my end of the conversation."

Randy bestowed one of her infrequent kisses on old Aunt Miranda's withered cheek, and gave her an impulsive hug. "You will save my life and uphold the honor of the family, Aunt Miranda." Her aunt's eyes glinted with pleasure. Evidently she was fonder of her blond-haired niece than she led people to suppose.

Fearful that she might betray some hint of her affection (Pa had considered any display of emotion as a bit immoral), she said with extra acidity, "There, there now. Let us only hope the young man knows his table manners and does not entertain us with lewd humor."

Aunt Miranda had reference to various and sundry young men whom Randy had met at the USO Club during the past few months and invited home to dinner. There had been the bashful lad, who had unique table manners. Grasping his fork handle with all five fingers, he had used it as a sort of bayonet to hold his food to his plate, and had refused to speak once during the meal. Then there had been the good-looking young private, who, it developed, had been a butcher before the draft. He entertained the family during dinner with detailed accounts of the proper way to cut up a beef carcass. Aunt Miranda said it was just a mercy Randy hadn't happened on an ex-undertaker. Perhaps the highlight of them all was the young corporal joker, who in the course of the meal hilariously asked Aunt Miranda what the little dog said who rubbed his nose on sand paper. Upon being told coldly she wasn't able to say, the young corporal shouted "Ruff, ruff," exploding with laughter. He continued to shout "ruff, ruff" each time he met Aunt Miranda's eye during the entire evening. Pa, via his daughter Miranda, had waxed eloquently wrathful after the young man's departure.

During the following week Mr. Jackson wondered what had come over the family. He had overheard his sister Miranda, who was his senior by fifteen years, reciting poetry in her room. He had recognized "Bingen on the Rhine," and the stirring "Charge of the Light Brigade" and "The Bells." The latter brought back an unpleasant memory of a time he had been made to recite it, and neatly forgotten it all except the bells which he had kept desperately repeating until the teacher had told him to sit down. Randy seemed to be wandering around the house with a distrait air, constantly mumbling to herself, as though she had something on her mind. He had inquired if she were having tests. She had replied she was merely brushing up on her poetry. Even his wife, who was usually quite level headed, had insisted on reading aloud to him "The Courtship of Miles Standish." The following day "Why

don't you speak for yourself, John?" fell from her lips several times. It was the only line she could quote from memory. He didn't know whether to be glad or sorry.

The situation, instead of clarifying, grew denser for Mr. Jackson on Saturday evening. An unusually good-looking marine sergeant with overseas ribbons on his chest appeared at the door and inquired for Randy.

"Come in, Sergeant, come in," said Mr. Jackson with the cordiality he displayed to all of Randy's service friends. He liked the young man's square shoulders, steady eyes, and clean brown hair. He learned the boy's name was Jimmy Kosnic. He seated him in a chair by the radio, offered him a cigar and the evening paper.

Randy had decided it was time for her to make her entrance. "Hel-lo-o Jimmy, I'm *glad* to see you," she said, extending both hands. The marine quickly took them in his.

"I'm so terribly glad to see you again too, Randy," he said with sincerity. The look of approval in his eyes caused Mr. Jackson to have a warm surge of liking for him. Anyone who admired Randy held the pass key to her father's good graces.

Randy's pale green dress clung becomingly. It also emphasized the sheen of her blonde page-boy bob, and turned her eyes a deep sea green. Briefly it was a satisfactory frock.

Up to this place the evening was following a routine with which Mr. Jackson was familiar. But at this juncture the unexpected began. His usually rather cold, reserved sister came into the room and extending her hand to Jimmy, said, "'Oh young Lochinvar has come out of the west.' How do you do, young man? Where have you left your steed?"

"M-ma,am," stammered the sergeant, politely shaking hands.

Mrs. Jackson came in to meet the guest. Her sincerely cordial greeting restored the young man's equilibrium. But her husband could have sworn her remark about the lovely day was merely a pretext to give her an opportunity to exclaim, "'Oh what is so rare as a day in June,' unless it is an equally rare one in October." It sounded a bit too pat to him.

"My sa-akes," warbled Randy. "I do love Lowell. I don't know how many times I've read the 'Vision of Sir Launfal'" (Most of them had been in the past week.) His poetry is so pure and dignified. Don't you think so, Jimmy?" Her question was accompanied with an upward roll of her green eyes in his direction and white teeth generously exposed by smiling red lips. Jimmy did agree with alacrity.

When they were seated at the table, Aunt Miranda to her brother's astonishment, hit her pace. With the soup, she declared her first love had been and still was Tennyson. She quoted with ease such excerpts as

"Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."

And with great expression,

"They call me cruel hearted, but I care not what they say,
For I'm to be Queen of the May, Mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May'!"

Mr. Jackson stole a glance at the sergeant and saw to his relief that after the first shock the lad was taking it in his stride. He made appropriate, if non-committal replies, ate his food with relish and stole satisfactory glances at Randy.

Mrs. Jackson had evidently fired her greatest round of ammunition when she had contributed her quotation about the rarity of the weather. But not so, Aunt Miranda. With the main course she sprang lightly from Coleridge, Keats, Byron, and Shelley, (her brother's amazement was tinged with admiration) to Milton, the blind poet. Her quotation from his sonnet "On His Blindness" brought from Randy the remark that she simply adored blank verse. Jimmy half strangled himself on a mouthful of chicken to agree with her, as to his fondness for it. Mrs. Jackson evidently thought she had lain down on the job long enough. She contributed that English poets were very good, but that for her part, she loved our own American Longfellow. Her husband wondered sinkingly if Priscilla's conversation with John Alden was about due for another airing.

He also felt that as the host he was making a very poor showing, but for the life of him he could only recall a couple of lines of one poem and that was "The Night Before Christmas," which he used to read to Randy. So he held his peace and his poetry.

Inspired by Mrs. Jackson's prediletion for American poets, Miranda by dessert time had worked up to Poe's "Raven." Her brother had never given the matter much consideration, but he decided it was the raven with his "Nevermore." He also thought wrathfully he had never enjoyed a good meal less. He was relieved when it was over.

Later as Randy and Jimmy were walking over to Joan's and enjoying the bright October moon, the Sergeant drew her hand through his arm with a protective gesture.

"Gee, Randy," he said humbly, watching the glint of moonbeams on blonde hair, "this has been one of the most special evenings of my whole life. I didn't know how much pleasure I was missing in not reading more poetry until I listened to your mother and aunt discussing it tonight. You remember I told you last week when I met you, my father is a Pole, and probably Polish people aren't very poetical. My father is a good business man, but I am afraid he never stressed poetry much around our house. What's the matter, Randy? Sa-ay, are you laughing at me because I don't know much poetry? Listen here, Taffy-Randy, when I come back next week, (you will let me come, won't you, Randy) I'm going to know 'The Bells' and 'The Raven' by heart, so help me."